

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed September 4, 2008, the Examiner rejected claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph for indefiniteness and rejected claims 1, 4-9, and 12-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Huang et al., A General Purpose Virtual Collaboration Room, IEEE, pages 1-10, 10/1999 (Huang) in view of Pirri et al., A Java applet-based virtual environment as a useable interface to distributed and collaborative application on the Internet, IEEE 6/1999 (Pirri).

By this Amendment, Applicant amends claims 1, 5, and 9 to more clearly define the features of those claims and amends claim 16 to respond to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The amendments are supported by the specification (see, e.g., FIG. 5 and paragraph 0058).

Claims 1, 4-9, and 12-14, and 16 are currently pending.

Regarding the rejection of claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph for indefiniteness, Applicant submits that the amendments obviate the basis of the rejection, and thus the rejection of the claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, should be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 4-9, and 12-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Huang in view of Pirri. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

At the outset, Applicant respectfully points out that the Examiner appears to be ignoring the express language of claim 1. Applicant respectfully reminds the Examiner that M.P.E.P. 2131 states "The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the ... claim." *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.*, 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 USPQ2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989)."

Amended claim 1 recites a combination of features including, among other things, "a virtual object space providing access to a plurality of objects, each object having a set of functionality and being identifiable by a unique identifier provided by the virtual object space, and providing generic object functionality for the plurality of objects including an associations and transactions

functionality for relating the plurality of objects and interaction between the plurality of objects, a distribution functionality for locking, flushing, and copying of the virtual object space, and a persistency functionality for maintaining persistency of the plurality of objects, the generic object functionally including a first interface for applications using the plurality of objects and a second interface for a service deploying the plurality of objects, the service providing an adapter to map the unique identifier to the plurality of objects and to objects internal to the service, the access being a virtual access provided using the unique identifier without physically storing the plurality of objects at the virtual object space."

On page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner alleges that Huang at pages 2, 3, 5, and 9 discloses the above-noted feature of claim 1. However, a careful scrutiny of the cited passages reveals that Huang does not disclose (for at least the reason given below) what the Examiner alleges.

The Examiner appears to allege that Huang at page 3, section 2, discloses "virtual object space ... providing generic object functionality for the plurality of objects including an associations and transactions functionality for relating the plurality of objects and interaction between the plurality of objects." Applicant disagrees and submit that Huang merely discloses:

The VCR mainly consists of a workspace, group chat, and room management. When entering the VCR from a standard Web browser, a user can see the room layout as shown in Figure 1. The *workspace* is a virtual space where active objects are placed and users conduct work and interact with others via interactions with the objects. Due to a limited size of the display window, the display window is regarded as a visible subspace of the workspace. The workspace in VCR is divided into six working *subspaces* and only one of them is visible at a time. However, it can be flexibly switched from one working subspace to another and an object can be freely moved in the workspace. The *group chat* is a text-based chat shared by all group members. When someone would like to chat with only a subset of people, he/she can create a partially shared chat board.

Huang, section 2, lines 1-16. However, a careful scrutiny of the above passage reveals that the only interaction that is mentioned is user interaction rather than the claimed feature noted above.

Moreover, the Examiner alleges that Huang at page 9, left column, lines 1-20 discloses the following feature of claim 1: "a virtual object space providing ... a distribution functionality for locking, flushing, and copying of the virtual object space." However, Huang at page 9 merely discloses a database, without any mention of the above noted features. Specifically, Huang states:

The recorder in the room server keeps a record of messages from clients. It creates a log for each alive object and records a whole process of manipulations on the object. The database in a room server stores useful room data such as a list of group members, recorded objects, objects in a group case and a private drawer, and others. Each client consists of a dispatcher, a set of objects on a workspace and a room manager. The dispatcher is responsible for sending and receiving messages between the assistant in the room server and the objects or the room manager in the client's side. The room manager, as described before, will manage the workspace and objects, capture and present necessary awareness information, and take correspondent actions after receiving input from a user. When a user exits the room, the client program exits from the user machine and the related assistant is accordingly removed from the room server.

Huang, page 9, lines 2-20.

Furthermore, the Examiner alleges that Huang at page 2, right column, second paragraph, discloses the following feature of claim 1: "a virtual object space providing access to a plurality of objects ... the access being a virtual access provided using the unique identifier without physically storing the plurality of objects at the virtual object space." But Huang clearly *teaches away* from this feature by stating that the object can be persisted in the virtual room. Specifically, Huang states:

A room in the real world is usually used for one activity or multiple activities. Therefore, it is rationale to use a room metaphor or model as a framework in development of the system - virtual collaboration room (VCR). Another good reason for using the room metaphor is that rooms are generally regarded as units

of constructing the virtual university, University21. Although the term room has been used in other groupware systems, most of them just exploit the room concept as some kind of abstraction for their system functions [2][3][4][5] and have not made systematic developments based on the room model, i.e., by emulating a real room. One of significant features in the room model approach is the spatial relationship which refers to the concept that a virtual room is a spatial container where an object can be placed, moved and persisted over time [6].

Huang at page 2, right col. second. paragraph.

In view of the foregoing, Huang fails to disclose or suggest at least the following features of claim 1: "a virtual object space providing access to a plurality of objects, each object having a set of functionality and being identifiable by a unique identifier provided by the virtual object space, and providing generic object functionality for the plurality of objects including an associations and transactions functionality for relating the plurality of objects and interaction between the plurality of objects, a distribution functionality for locking, flushing, and copying of the virtual object space, and a persistency functionality for maintaining persistency of the plurality of objects, the generic object functionally including a first interface for applications using the plurality of objects and a second interface for a service deploying the plurality of objects, the service providing an adapter to map the unique identifier to the plurality of objects and to objects internal to the service, the access being a virtual access provided using the unique identifier without physically storing the plurality of objects at the virtual object space."

Moreover, although Pirri discloses the use of applets, Pirri does not cure the above noted deficiencies of Huang. Therefore, claim 1 is allowable over Huang and Pirri, whether those references are taken alone or in combination, and the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of claim 1 and claims 4 and 13, at least by reason of their dependency from independent claim 1, should be withdrawn.

With respect to Pirri, the Examiner alleges that Pirri discloses "a virtual object space providing access to a plurality of objects, each object having a set of functionality and being

identifiable by a unique identifier provided by the virtual object space, and providing generic object functionality ... the generic object functionality including a first interface for interface for applications using the plurality of objects and a second interface for a service deploying the plurality of objects, the service providing an adapter to map the unique identifier to the plurality of objects and to objects internal to the service," as recited in claim 1. However, Pirri merely discloses a single interface rather than the claimed first and second interface configuration noted above with respect to claim 1. Specifically, Pirri states:

A typical example of network service is, instead, the *Chat-Line*, that allows a textual communication among avatars. These services belong to the VERSA platform and don't need to be imported from elsewhere. As already mentioned, one main function of VERSA is providing an interface to distributed Internet applications and services. Application and services that use VERSA protocol are indicated as *VERSAs-compatible services*. These external services can also be indicated as *network services*, since any difference with VERSA network services is completely masked to the user. In facts, a unique common protocol is implemented by them all. VERSA implements a *Service Interface* that has the function of establishing the dialogue with other available services implementing this interface as well. An example of VERSA-compatible application is *Orchestral* [11] that permits the creation of virtual musical groups and manages <live> performances and recording studio activities. VERSA offers to *Orchestral* a common development platform and a virtual meeting place for its "community".

Pirri, page 859, left column. Because Pirri fails to disclose or suggest the above noted features, claim 1 is allowable over Huang and Pirri, whether those references are taken alone or in combination, and the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of claim 1 and claims 4 and 13, at least by reason of their dependency from independent claim 1, should be withdrawn for this additional reason.

Claims 5 and 9, although of different scope, include features similar to those noted above with respect to claim 1. Claims 6-8 depend from claim 5. Claims 12, 14, and 16 depend from

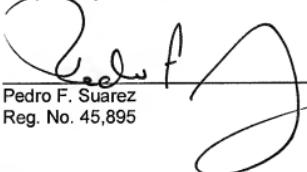
claim 9. For at least the reasons given above with respect to claim 1, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of claims 5-9, 12, 14, and 16 should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed in this paper. However, failure to address a specific rejection, issue or comment, does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above are not intended to be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

If there are any questions regarding these amendments and remarks, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below. No fee is believed to be due, however, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees that may be due, or credit any overpayment of same, to Deposit Account No. 50-0311, Reference No. 34874-162/2003P00269US.

Respectfully submitted,



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